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THE DAWN OF ARMAGEDDON

OR "THE PROVOCATION BY SERBIA"
(vide German Note to Neutrals. Jan. 11, 1917)

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By

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"The Provocation by Serbia"*

(*vide* German Note to Neutrals, Jan. 11, 1917)

The history of Austro-Serbian relations is the record of a prolonged struggle between the forces of autocracy and democracy, oppression and freedom. It is a story of the desire of an organised despotism, at once sensible of its vulnerability and consumed by the lust for territorial expansion, to ride roughshod over the liberties and rights of the weak within, and to crush the development and independence of the small without.

The Austro-Hungarian ultimatum of July 23rd, 1914, was the last challenge to Serbia to choose between vassalage and annihilation; it was the culmination of a determination, by fair means or foul, to break the national spirit of the Serbs or trample them out of existence as an independent people; it was a final effort to destroy the rampart which the Serbian renaissance had built up between Berlin and Baghdad and between Vienna and Salonika.

When Metternich declared that "Serbia must be either Turkish or Austrian," he implied that Austria was content that Turkey should hold the principedom (as it was then) in pawn for the Habsburgs, but that she would never tolerate Serbian independence. Here we have the keynote of the policy which the Dual Monarchy followed with remarkable

* This account of the pre-war relations of Serbia and Austria-Hungary comprises the first section of "Serbia's Part in the War" (the political and military history of the Serbian campaigns), by Crawford Price, which will shortly be published by Messrs. Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co., London.

persistence down to July, 1914, and the explanation of the important fact that, whenever the Serbian throne was occupied by a ruler who set in the forefront of his programme the development of the State and the unification of the race, he incurred, *ipso facto*, the active enmity and powerful opposition of Austria-Hungary.

With a view to simplicity of explanation, it is advantageous to divide the history of Austro-Serbian pre-war relations into three periods:—

- (1) From the Serbian revolution to the Berlin Congress (1878).
- (2) From the Berlin Congress to the accession of King Peter (1903).
- (3) From 1903 to 1914.

Similarly, it is necessary to draw attention to the four distinct methods employed by Austria-Hungary to obtain a stranglehold upon Serbia. These were:

- (a) Commercial and economic pressure.
- (b) The corruption of Serbian rulers.
- (c) The suppression of Jugo-Slav nationalism in the Monarchy.
- (d) The threat of military action against the Serbian State.

THE FIRST PERIOD

The first phase of Serbia's struggle for Independence (against Turkey) commenced in 1804, when Karageorge, the ancestor of King Peter, raised the standard of Liberty in the Choumadia. Though the battle of Michar (August 13th, 1806) really gave birth to the new Serbian principality, the early stage of the contest between Turk and Serb continued with varying fortune until 1813, when Karageorge was defeated and obliged to take refuge across the frontier. The Serbian question had by this

time already taken on a European character, and the assistance rendered to the Porte by Vienna was rewarded by a costly present, the gift of the Sultan to the Austrian Ambassador.

At a later date (1843) when Serbia, then in enjoyment of autonomy but still subject to the *régime* of the Commercial Treaties concluded by the Ottoman Government (according to which all imports paid a toll of 8 per cent. ad val.), sought authority to make her own fiscal arrangements, her efforts, undertaken with the consent of the Porte, were successfully opposed by Austria at Belgrade and Constantinople, on the ground that "Serbia being a Turkish province, she could not commit an act of autonomy in external affairs."

Again, in 1862, when, after the Turkish troops stationed in the citadel of Belgrade had bombarded the defenceless town for five hours, France and Russia demanded the withdrawal of the Ottoman garrison, Austria opposed the evacuation because she feared the effect that would be produced upon her own Southern Slav subjects. For this further service to the Porte she was rewarded with a reduction of the Serbian tariff to 5 per cent.—a concession which placed her in a privileged position and gave her control of the Serbian market.

These selections from a mass of available evidence will, perhaps, suffice to demonstrate that during the early phase of the regeneration of the Balkan States, Christian Austria, for sordid political motives, actually conspired with Mohammedan Turkey to render abortive Serbia's attempt to win her own freedom and strike a telling blow for the Cross against the Crescent. Yet, crushed as it was between the millstones of Austria and Turkey, the cause of liberty grew and flourished in Serbia. Under the wise guidance of Prince Michel (1860) notable progress was registered, and ideas of Jugo-Slav union spread over the lands from the Drave to the Rhodopes, and from the Adriatic to the Black Sea.

During the eight years of his reign, Prince Michel laid the foundations of a Balkan League, and his plans were nigh unto fruition when on June 10th, 1868, he was brutally murdered at Belgrade. Austro-Hungarian diplomacy has never cleared itself of complicity in this crime, and the suspicion that its hired assassins fired the fatal shots is heightened by the fact that his death made way for the accession of Prince Milan, a renegade monarch who soon fell under the influence of the Habsburgs, and who seriously compromised the finances of his country and brought much discredit on the nation by his unkingly conduct.

The intrigues worked by the Monarchy through the instrumentality of Milan proved fatal to the cause of Southern Slav unity for generations. Not only did the era of corruption and misgovernment which he inaugurated in Serbia unfit the army to render any effective support to the Bosnian Serbs during their revolution (1875-6), but, what was perhaps infinitely more important, he earned the displeasure of Russia. Partly on this account Austro-Hungarian diplomacy (ably supported by Bismark, who thus early regarded the Habsburg Empire as the advance guard of Germany in the Orient), succeeded in depriving the Bosnians of the Tzar's assistance, and at the Conference of Reichstadt (July, 1876) Count Andrassy secured a formal promise that under no circumstances would Serbia be permitted to acquire the territories of Dalmatia, Slavonia and Croatia. Austria-Hungary thereby registered a notable diplomatic victory, for by this essential error, Russia abandoned the Serbs to Habsburg influence. In revenge, she set herself thenceforward to create a powerful Bulgaria as her own outpost in the Peninsula, and laid the foundation of one aspect of the troublesome Balkan question of to-day.

So it came to pass that, although Serbia rendered Russia important assistance in the Russo-Turkish War (1878) the Tzar sought to create the "Big" Bulgaria (Treaty of San

Stefano) which englobed not merely the territories actually inhabited by Bulgars, but any other part of the Peninsula to which the Slav race might in the future be able to put forward any sort of claim. And when the Powers called a Congress, Serbia went to Berlin discredited and alone. She was abandoned by Russia, ignored by England and Germany, and forced to rely upon such support as Austria-Hungary might deem fit to accord her. The question of vital moment for Serbia, the future of Bosnia and Hertze-govina, had actually been settled by a secret convention between Austria and England before the Conference opened its deliberations, and that understanding was embodied in the Treaty in the form of a declaration that the Provinces should be occupied and administered by Austria-Hungary. Austria was also accorded liberty to garrison the Sandjak of Novi Bazaar, while a further Convention between Austria and Russia engaged the Tzar to offer no objection if, as a result of any inconvenience arising from the continuation of Turkish administration in the Sandjak, Austria-Hungary decided to occupy it definitely along with the rest of Bosnia.

The Congress of Berlin marked for Austria-Hungary a distinct step in the subjugation of Serbia. She succeeded in landlocking her little neighbour and in so limiting the Big Bulgaria planned by Russia that, south of Serbia, Turkey remained in provisional occupation and the way remained clear for the Dual Monarchy to continue her penetration towards Salonika.

True, Austria obtained for Serbia certain advantages. She was finally liberated from Turkey and received the districts of Nish, Pirot, Vrania and Lescovatz (all of them necessary to the Monarchy's contemplated descent to the Ægean!) and Milan was elevated to the rank of kingship. But the favours were dearly bought. From the Austrian point of view, it was merely an affair of stuffing the pig in preparation for the banquet. Milan himself became a well-paid vassal. He persistently favoured the Austrians to

the detriment of his own subjects and declared Pan-Slavism to be the enemy of Serbia. Austrian soldiers mapped out the country and sat on the General Staff. Nor was this all. Austro-Hungarian diplomacy gave much consideration to the advantages of commercial and economic penetration as a means to political control. In other words, it sought to achieve political domination by strengthening its hold on the Serbian markets to the exclusion of other States, and thus virtually reducing Serbia to the position of an Austrian colony.

THE SECOND PERIOD

Austria-Hungary opened the second period of her relations with the quasi-independent Serbian State by an attempt to force a Customs Union upon it. She had every reason to anticipate an easy success. As we have seen, she had rid herself of the danger of Russian interference and virtually secured possession of Bosnia-Hertzevovina; King Milan was her servant; she had taken the kingdom under her wing at Berlin, and the moment was apparently favourable for its reduction to a condition of vassalage. Had the Habsburgs taken a leaf from the history of British Colonial administration and admitted the Serbs to the Empire on an equal footing with Germans and Magyars, the whole future development of European politics might have been altered; but the two most powerful elements in the Monarchy were animated by other objects. They sought not equality, but domination, and the principle of self-government was entirely foreign to the ideas which ruled at Vienna and Budapest.

The Serbs had been tragically humiliated, yet the national spirit survived the ordeal, and when the proposal of a Customs Union was put forward, it broke down before the opposition of the Skoupshtina. But Count Andrassy was determined to persist with his plan, and on July 8th,

1878 (during the Berlin Congress), he imposed upon Serbia an entente which included the following conditions. Serbia was engaged :

- (1) To conclude a Treaty of Commerce with Austria-Hungary immediately after the Congress of Berlin, and to assure to the Monarchy special privileges in the form of "Commerce limitrophe."
- (2) To take steps with a view to a future Commercial Union with Austria-Hungary.

Perceiving in these stipulations a direct menace to their independence, the Serbs sought to evade the issue by arranging a Treaty of Commerce with England on the basis of the Most-Favoured-Nation clause. This provoked energetic protests from Vienna ; the Cabinet of Dr. Ristitch was forced to resign, and the new Government, obliged to accept the demands in their entirety, eventually concluded a treaty (1881) which embodied the Austrian desiderata.

The strength of the control thus secured by Austria-Hungary will be better appreciated by the examination of two clauses of the Treaty. The first concerned the arrangements for "commerce limitrophe." Under the conditions imposed, Austria succeeded in monopolising Serbia's export of cereals, fruit and live-stock, and, in return, secured great facilities for the introduction of her manufactures of paper, porcelain, glass, wood and iron—that is to say, for such articles as she had reason to fear foreign competition or the development of local Serbian industry.

In effect, the Monarchy thus obtained the following advantages :—

- (a) She limited Serbia's markets by drawing to herself 90 per cent. of the export and 80 per cent. of the import trade of the Kingdom.
- (b) She stifled the recently inaugurated development of manufacturing industry in Serbia, and restricted her production to cereals, fruits and live-stock.

- (c) She popularised a belief that the loss of the Austrian market would be tantamount to a national calamity.

Another, and, in reality, the most important clause in the Treaty (*i.e.*, that which gave to Serbia the right to export her live-stock to Austria-Hungary and to forward it in transit across the country) limited the circumstances under which the frontier could be closed to transport (in case of epidemic), the supposed object being to assure Serbia against arbitrary action in this respect. Instead of a safeguard for Serbia, however, the clause became a powerful weapon in the hands of Austria-Hungary whenever she desired to obtain any political objects in the neighbouring Kingdom. During the existence of the Treaty (1882-1905) Austria-Hungary closed the frontier on eleven occasions, on only two of which the Convention could be applied; on the other nine occasions the motives were political!

All Serbia's attempts to throw off the shackles were in vain. Austria-Hungary held her Northern and Western frontiers, there was no market to the East, the passage of the Danube was closed by the tax-barrier erected by Austria-Hungary at the Iron Gate, and the route to Salonika lay over the line of the Oriental Railway Company, a concern under the direct influence of Vienna. The Habsburgs had indeed manœuvred with considerable success, and, thanks to the assistance of their servile confederate, the Serbian King, they proceeded to drive home the initial advantage. Milan had always need of money wherewith to support his life of vicious luxury and satisfy the demands of his corrupt partisans, and, almost simultaneously with the loss of fiscal liberty, he signed away his country's political birthright for a mess of Austrian gold. In order to stifle opposition to his nefarious practices, he made a mockery of the constitution, and in 1881 entered into a secret convention with Austria-Hungary (renewed in 1889) by which she was to assist the extension of Serbia

in the Vardar valley; Serbia on her part was never to tolerate a Serbia propaganda in the Austrian Jugo-Slav provinces, and, in case of war, was to open the fortresses of Belgrade and Nish to Austrian troops. The policy of the Dual Monarchy now appears before us stripped of all its hypocrisy. She had secured economic control of Serbia, she had the King in her pay, and, thus assured of Serbian vassalage, she was ready to use her as a pioneer to open the road to Salonika, and to strengthen her so that she could thereby be used as an instrument to weaken Bulgaria, a State which Vienna regarded as the tool of Russia in the Balkans.

Four years later the occasion arose. On receipt of the news of the Bulgarian revolution of 1885, which had for its object union with Eastern Roumelia, Austria called upon Milan to oppose this threatened expansion of his neighbour. Faithful to his paymasters, the king mobilised his army; but, under the sinister influence of the ruler, the fighting forces of Serbia had by this time degenerated into a disorganised, ill-equipped horde, led by officers who, the product of a corrupt *régime*, possessed confidence neither in themselves nor their cause. On November 16th, 1885, the Serbs invaded Bulgaria. Their progress was arrested at Tzaribrod, the Bulgars defeated them at Slivnitza and marched on Nish. The catastrophe aroused a storm of protest against the dynasty, and there was a consensus of opinion in favour of the abdication of Milan; but upon promises of support arriving from Austria, the king determined to fight on. The people, however, saw very clearly that they were simply being sacrificed in the interests of Austria, and they had little personal interest in an attempt to weaken a neighbour with whom they had no quarrel. Thus supported, the Skoupshtina was able to insist on the conclusion of peace on the basis of the *status quo ante bellum*.

In 1889 Milan abdicated in favour of his son Alexander, a young man who, in very truth, had little to recommend

him. He inherited most all the vices of his father, under whose demoralising influence he remained after his accession, and it followed, almost as a matter of course, that the dynastic liaison with Austria continued to the exclusion of any tentative towards a rapprochement with Russia. It is mere justice to suggest that Alexander was mentally irresponsible. He made the constitution a plaything of his ever-changing fancy, imprisoned and exiled the mouthpieces of popular discontent, and culminated a series of outrages against the well-being of his people and the sanctity of his office by marrying Draga Machin, a woman of very unwholesome reputation whose *amours* were a scandal in the city of Belgrade prior to her elevation to the queenship. The Serbs are a proud people, and though they had suffered patiently the many humiliations which had been heaped upon them, this last insult roused them to action. A vast conspiracy against the monarch was organised, and the leaders, realising that they had to reckon with Austria as well as Alexander and his courtiers, determined on swift and drastic action, raided the Palace on the night of June 10th, 1903, and assassinated the King and his Consort.

In this fashion Serbia not only rid herself of the Obrenovitch dynasty (Alexander was the last of his line), but also checkmated the carefully laid plans of Austria-Hungary to secure control of the country through the medium of the Austrophil rulers who had been so long tolerated out of respect for the law of succession and the services rendered by their ancestors.

THE THIRD PERIOD

The assassination of King Alexander, announcing as it did the end of the Austrian *régime* in Belgrade, was a severe blow to the ambitions of Viennese diplomacy. But its effect was even more marked in Serbia. With the introduction of popular control, the old spirit that had so long languished under Milan and Alexander quickly

revived, and there set in a general process of national regeneration which developed rapidly alongside the reorganisation of the army. Further, the return of the Karageorgevitch dynasty restored Russian influence, and the question of Southern Slav union became once more an important factor in Balkan politics.

While it is permissible to conclude that the Habsburgs were impatient to take the Serbian bull by the horns, respect for Russia doubtless persuaded them to proceed with caution. It was, therefore, fortuitous for them that the old Austro-Serbian Commercial Treaty was due to expire in 1905, and this fact placed in their hands a pacific weapon of which they were not slow to avail themselves. Desiring now more than ever to seal their economic hold upon Serbia, the representatives of Austria-Hungary sought to withdraw the privileges hitherto accorded to the little Kingdom, while insisting upon the maintenance of their own. No immediate understanding resulted, for on this occasion they found themselves faced by a Government which was determined, in so far as it possessed the power, to safeguard the national interests.

In the meantime, there set in a movement in favour of a Serbo-Bulgarian rapprochement. True to the traditions of Prince Michel, the democratic Serbs were predisposed in favour of a Slav Entente and failed to estimate correctly the motives which actuated this demonstration of Bulgarian friendliness. Consequently, the first overtures from Sofia were received with enthusiasm, and pourparlers were engaged upon with a view to the conclusion of a Customs Union. When this startling development reached Austrian ears, Serbo-Austrian negotiations were immediately broken off, and they remained in suspense until a further report that Serbia was treating with both the Vickers and Creusot factories in respect to a large order for artillery so alarmed the Ballplatz that it was decided to bring matters to a head without delay. The Austro-Hungarian Government thereupon refused to renew the Treaty of Commerce unless

Serbia agreed to make all her State purchases in the Monarchy (this stipulation really meant that the canon should be bought at Skoda), accepted financial assistance from the government-controlled Union Bank, and ended the negotiations with Bulgaria.

Austria doubtless believed that this threat of displeasure would bring Belgrade to heel. But she reckoned without the Serbian renaissance. The Serbs had discovered themselves since their liberation from Austrophile despotism in 1903, and, under the leadership of a Constitutional monarch, they made their first bid for commercial independence. The refusal to capitulate shocked Austria—so many years of willing tutelage had unfitted her for any sign of fight from across the Save—and, with the conviction that Serbia would soon be reduced to submission and go cap in hand to Vienna to request a new treaty, ready to accept any and every condition, she broke off commercial relations, closed the frontier and declared the famous Pig War (June, 1906), simultaneously massing large forces in Bosnia and along the northern frontier.

Austria could have rendered to Serbia no greater service. Faced with the closing of the Austro-Hungarian frontier, she was impelled to seek other markets. M. Pashitch obtained from Parliament a credit destined to assist the search for new outlets, opened divers commercial agencies abroad, obtained a reduction in the freight to Salonika, secured a concession for the erection of stables and stock sheds in that Ægean port, and signed numerous conventions with shipping companies for transport of Serbian produce to Egypt, Malta, Italy and elsewhere. Thanks to this energetic statesmanship and the high prices ruling during this period, little loss was inflicted upon the Serbs during the five years over which the Customs war extended.

Yet, despite this comparative success, the difficulties which had been temporarily overcome by the Government clearly exposed the weak points in Serbia's position, and

the nation realised that the principal cause of its economic dependence upon Austria lay in the lack of communications. To reach any seaport, it was necessary to transport the merchandise through either Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria or Turkey—a fact which entailed a certain dependence upon them—and this knowledge gave birth to a desire to ameliorate the geographical situation of the Kingdom. There accordingly sprang up that agitation in favour of an outlet to the Adriatic which was one of the principal reasons of Serbia's participation in the first Balkan war.

The success which attended the Serbian bid for commercial freedom destroyed Austria's hope of conquering the country by pacific means, and there can be little doubt that the progress made in its reorganisation decided Vienna that resort must be made eventually to sterner measures. It had also been discovered that the Sandjak of Novi Bazaar provided a poor route to the Ægean, and it was always to be remembered that, at the Berlin Congress, Ottoman sovereignty over Bosnia and Hertzegovina had been recognised and the Austro-Hungarian occupation therefore remained legally contestable. If Austria had needed any encouragement to make her occupation of Bosnia and Hertzegovina definite—other than the growing strength of Serbia—same was provided by the Young Turk revolution with its dreams of Ottoman restoration. It must also be remarked that there was proceeding simultaneously an evolution in Bulgarian policy, and that while Serbia, having thrown off the Austrian yoke, now looked to Russia for salvation, Bulgaria, under the guidance of Prince Ferdinand—a Magyar officer and noble—was drawing nearer to Austria. There had been, one may put it, a transference of allegiance on the part of the two States.

* * * * *

As we approach that critical epoch in history when the Habsburg Government first presented Europe with the choice between a general conflagration and a furtherance

of Pan-German ambition, it becomes necessary briefly to review the situation in Bosnia-Hertzegovina. Truth to tell, this had long been a cause for serious misgiving, for, side by side with the attempt to dragoon the Kingdom of Serbia into submission, there had been carried on a definite campaign conducted with a view to crushing the Serbo-Croatian population in the Monarchy and preventing it from realising its racial and linguistic unity with the Serbs of Serbia. When it is remembered that the Slav population of Austria-Hungary totalled no less than 50 per cent. of the whole, it will be obvious that the task of maintaining the Germans and Magyars in a dominating position was one of no mean difficulty. To this end, the Southern Slavs (seven and a half millions) were divided between Austria and Hungary and parcelled out into eleven different administrative sectors, and an attempt was made to Germanise or Magyarise them as the case might be.

Thus the population, although they had suffered much under the Turkish *régime*, had shown themselves in no mood to welcome the decision of the Berlin Congress. They were already sufficiently in touch with German and Magyar methods to anticipate that the alleged desire of Austria-Hungary to end the state of anarchy and oppression in which they had lived when the Crescent floated from their fortresses would merely place them under a new tyranny, and in this they were not mistaken. No honest effort was made to better their conditions, the iniquities of the feudal system survived the change of government, and in 1882 the universal unrest was manifested by a revolt which broke out in Northern Bosnia. The Government then, as always, proved itself much more capable and thorough in the suppression of protest against persecution than in its removal, and the rising was put down by the customary blood and iron methods, which were followed by a veritable reign of terror.

But the fire of liberty had taken too great a hold in the land to be snuffed out even by a combination of hangman's

rope, prison cells and cruel repression, and there sprang up a demand for provincial autonomy in which, it is important to note, the Mussulman and Orthodox sections of the population joined hands. This movement, harried as it was by an alert and autocratic administration, developed slowly; but it survived troops, gendarmes, secret police, *agents provocateurs* and corrupt tribunals alike, and, fomented by opposition to the Austrian and Magyar monopoly of public appointments and the official exploitation under which the provinces groaned, grew steadily in strength. It is noteworthy, though perhaps little more than a coincidence, that protest against the scandalous *régime* of the Hungarian Count Khuen Hedervary became more marked after the advent of King Peter to the throne of Serbia. In 1905, the Croatian and Serbian parties coalesced, the Dalmatians adhered to the movement, the Slovenes endorsed it, and the Magyar Ban and his majority gave way. A year later, the agitation manifested itself in more violent form in the riots of Sarajevo and Mostar—risings which were as ruthlessly subdued as their predecessors. Brutal repression of this description only served to augment the prevailing unrest, and the position steadily worsened.

Into the situation produced by the renaissance of Serbia, the Russo-Serbian rapprochement, the Young Turk revolution and the welter of discontent in Bosnia-Hertzegovina, the Habsburgs flung the long-meditated Declaration of Annexation in 1908. In the Kingdom of Serbia itself this critical development created the utmost consternation. Upon receipt of the news in Belgrade the populace gathered *en masse* around the monument erected to the memory of Prince Michel, crying: "Down with Austria, who has introduced into Bosnia not liberty and civilisation, but an iron tyranny." The Serbian nation was roused to action, the spirit of Kossovo was born anew, and it was evident that the people were prepared to stake their all rather than be drawn themselves more firmly into the Austrian mesh,

see their kinsmen handed over an unwilling prey to the Habsburg vulture, and submit to the ruin of their highest ambitions and aspirations. But Serbia was still in the midst of her regeneration and preparation, and wars cannot be fought with good intentions. Everything turned, therefore, upon the attitude of Europe. There was excellent motive for European intervention. The Decree was a deliberate violation of two solemn treaties:—

- (1) The Treaty of Berlin (1878), which was signed by all the Great Powers, and
- (2) The Treaty of London (1871), to which Austria was a party, and which laid it down that no signatory power could liberate itself from treaty engagements without the consent of the other parties to it.

Further, it meant a definite strengthening of the Triple Alliance as against the Entente Cordiale and threatened the European equilibrium, while Turkey was naturally eager to oppose the blow at her sovereign rights. Above all, it was a direct affront to Russia, who had, so to speak, taken Serbia under her wing since the passing of Alexander, and was now anxious to remedy her past mistakes in the Balkans.

Austria-Hungary undoubtedly wanted war. There was an open manifestation of a desire to finish once and for all with Serbia; but there were restraining influences at work on both sides. So far as the German Empire was concerned, Prince Von Bulow, the Imperial Chancellor, did not consider the time opportune for a trial of strength. While he considered the German Fleet could hold up that of Russia, he desired to wait until he could challenge British maritime supremacy, considering that victories on land would not compensate for disaster at sea. He did not want to go so far as to provoke England, but rather desired to achieve the immediate object of Pan-Germanism by iron-handed diplomacy. Hence he curbed the war

spirit in Vienna. On the other hand, Russia had not recovered from the effects of the Japanese war and was in the midst of military reorganisation. Consequently she was not prepared to carry the dispute to the field of battle, and, while according to Serbia a considerable measure of diplomatic support, she capitulated on receipt of an ultimatum from Germany in March, 1909; whereupon Serbia, thrown upon her own resources, was forced to accept the *fait accompli* and make a hypocritical and consequently valueless declaration to the effect that none of her rights had thereby been infringed. Yet the Serbs emerged from out the crisis stronger and prouder, and thoroughly roused to the life-struggle which it was now obvious lay before them, it being plainly evident that Austria-Hungary would not rest content with the *status quo*. They therefore had to prepare to meet the inevitable attack under the best possible conditions; and while the Government worked to the completion of the army reorganisation, the Narodna Odbrana, which had been formed during the Annexation Crisis to enrol, train and equip volunteers by private effort, cast off its military cloak and devoted itself to the fostering of the patriotic spirit.

Whatever doubts as to the real intentions of Austria-Hungary had existed in some minds, they were now completely dispelled. Amongst other things, the precise object of the various commercial treaties that had been imposed upon the kingdom became clear even to the peasants, and while no stone was left unturned to strengthen the army, it was realised that the danger of strangulation by economic and commercial methods was almost as great as that of military invasion. Serbia was land-locked, she had no outlet save through countries which had been hostile to her for centuries and which might at any time hem her in completely on one pretext or another. Thus it became obvious that, if the nation was to attain that free and independent existence for which it was striving, an outlet to the Adriatic Sea was essential.

The outbreak of patriotism in Serbia and the demand for economic freedom which accompanied it were, of course, counted as an additional "provocation" by Austria-Hungary. Indeed, the Military Party in Vienna was very dissatisfied that a peaceful settlement had been attained. As early as November 5th, when the check was administered to the war-like ambitions of the military leaders, one of the leading service newspapers of Vienna wrote: "We have missed an excellent opportunity. When our monitors approached the Serbian capital we should have seized the city. Conflict with Serbia and Montenegro is inevitable. The longer we wait, the greater will be the cost." It is not surprising, therefore, that during the pourparlers which followed, many attempts (to which we shall presently refer) were made to precipitate hostilities, or that when, after the settlement, the Austro-Hungarians saw the Serbs rejoicing in their heritage instead of sitting in sackcloth and ashes, while they found themselves obliged to evacuate the Sandjak, pay a heavy indemnity to Turkey, suffer severe loss by reason of the Turkish boycott and support the cost of a partial mobilisation spread over a period of six months, they determined to provoke a new crisis as a result of which, with the assistance of Germany, Serbia should be definitely subjected either to vassalage or annihilation.

In what persistent manner they worked to this end we shall shortly demonstrate; but, in the meantime, it will be instructive to examine the relations of the Vienna Government to the Serbs and Croats of Bosnia-Hertzevovina from the date of the annexation. We have already outlined the situation in the autumn of 1908, and the annexation itself aroused the indignation of the populace entire. For them it meant not merely the destruction of a scrap of paper and the denial of the solemn pledges taken at Berlin, but the shackling of a nation in the iron chains of an already detested oppressor, the actual carrying off of a people into bondage. All that was best in the land rose up in solemn protest, and before the almost universal

unrest, the Vienna Government granted a so-called Constitution, which was so out of keeping with the essential principles of popular control that it has been freely likened to that "enjoyed" by Alsace-Lorraine. But the rising nationalists were not to be pacified by this expedient. On the opening day of the Diet a student fired at the Governor of Bosnia-Hertzevovina, and this shot inaugurated a series of violent outrages which culminated in the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand on June 28th, 1914.

The object of the Austro-Hungarian Government, it is almost needless to remark, was to stamp out the Jugo-Slav spirit in Bosnia and Hertzevovina, and for this purpose they decided to proceed by judicial methods, which, in the case of political trials in the Monarchy, are notoriously a travesty of justice. The two principal prosecutions now undertaken achieved European notoriety as a result of the methods employed. The first is known as the Agram (Zagreb) High Treason trial (August, 1908), when 53 Austrian Serbs were arraigned as the result of the publication in Budapest of a pamphlet called the "Finale," which purported to give details of a revolutionary Pan-Serbian movement among the Southern Slavs of the Monarchy. The witness was a notorious criminal and well known as an informer in the pay of the military authorities at Sarajevo, but his story was accepted by the Court, and upon this testimony, backed up by sundry fabricated documents, the defendants were found guilty and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

The evidence was, however, too flimsy to stand, even in an Austrian Court of Law. In the Croatian Parliament itself proofs were produced showing that the principal witness for the Crown had been paid to testify by the Prefect of Police in Agram, that he had been instructed as to the manner in which he was to reply to certain questions, and that his depositions were a tissue of flagrant falsehoods. In the face of a statement published by Counsel for the

Defence (Dr. Hinković), the Supreme Court subsequently quashed the convictions "because of considerable doubt as to the truth of the statements on which the finding was based"; but, fearing the result of a definite acquittal, the whole of the proceedings were set aside by a Royal Decree (September, 1910).

What is known as the Friedjung case presented an even more damaging example of Austro-Hungarian judicial methods. On March 25th, 1909, at the height of the annexation crisis, Dr. Friedjung, a well-known historian in close touch with the Government of Vienna, published an article in the *Neue Freie Presse* in which he accused the Serbian Royal Family and Government of having bribed the leaders of the Serbo-Croat Coalition to provoke a revolution in the Jugo-Slav provinces of the Monarchy. Having quoted a mass of circumstantial evidence, he asserted that he was in possession of all the proofs necessary to support his assertions.

The article was doubtless intended to inflame popular passions against Serbia and assist the precipitation of hostilities, but the publication practically coincided with Russia's capitulation, which removed all danger of war, and the only immediate result was a libel action brought against the writer by the Serbo-Croat deputies. The case came before the Courts in Vienna in December, 1909. The historian then produced his incriminating evidence, which consisted of photographs of documents alleged to have been stolen from the Serbian Foreign Office in Belgrade and from the offices of the "Slovenski Jug,"* together, amongst other details, with the minutes of that Society. The originals of the documents, it was asserted, had been returned to the archives in order that their disappearance should pass unnoticed.

Unfortunately for the Professor and the diplomacy of which he was either the representative or dupe, a brief examination demonstrated that his "proofs" were nothing

* Southern Slav Society.

more nor less than clumsy forgeries. The phraseology was German, the idioms were not Serbian but literal translations from the German, the facts were awry, and the forger had gone inexcusably wrong in his dates. Steps were immediately taken to disprove this evidence. It was shown that one of the documents purporting to have been stolen from the Serbian Foreign Office made reference to a "prospective" Serbian loan which had actually been raised a year previously. All the photographs of minutes of the "Slovenski Jug" referred to the meetings as having been presided over by Professor Bozho Markovitch and bore his signature; but no less an authority than the Berlin police was obliged to testify that during the whole period covered by the alleged minutes, M. Markovitch was engaged upon certain scientific studies in the German capital.

The mystery was definitely cleared up some months later, when an impecunious individual named Vasitch was arrested in Belgrade. At his trial he stated that, originally engaged as a tutor to the children of a secretary of the Austro-Hungarian Legation in Belgrade, he had later on been bribed to redraw the drafts of diplomatic reports and the minutes of the meetings of the "Slovenski Jug," which were submitted to him in very indifferent Serbian written in Latin characters, and to forge the signatures of certain persons, the originals of some of which were supplied and others of which he had to procure for himself. This work was executed in the Austro-Hungarian Legation and the texts were photographed. Vasitch produced substantial proof of his allegations (amongst them being a copy of the fabricated protocols of the "Slovenski Jug" meeting written in his own hand) and also explained to the Court the manner in which he had succeeded in blackmailing the Austrian Legation until arrested by the Serbian authorities. He was sentenced to five years' penal servitude.

There is little to add to this sordid story of Austrian diplomacy, save to point out that had war resulted from

the intrigue, Serbia would have been occupied and many and sundry in the Austrian Jugo-Slav provinces would have been put to death on a charge of conspiracy, for which actions the Friedjung forgeries would have been put forward as ample justification. The chief forger was none other than His Excellency Count Forgach, who became subsequently a departmental chief of the Vienna Foreign Office and was part author of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia of July, 1914. Before, however, these facts came to light, Professor Friedjung publicly regretted his "mistake" and, under pressure from the Authorities, the prosecution for libel was abandoned.

There have been many other disclosures of the part allocated to Austro-Hungarian "justice" in the suppression of the nationalism of the Jugo-Slavs, but the "Agram" and "Friedjung" trials will suffice as examples. Needless to say, this persecution of innocent people in the annexed provinces fomented the desire to escape from the thralldom, and the intellectuals naturally came to regard Serbia as their one possible hope of salvation. The masses, too, found that no improvement in their particular lot followed the disappearance of Turkish suzerainty. They remained crushed under a heavy load of extortionate rent and taxation, and the state of growing unrest among the peasantry was evidenced by serious agrarian riots in northern Bosnia in 1910.

It is clear, therefore, that even prior to the Balkan wars all classes in Bosnia-HertzeGovina were united in hostility to Austro-Hungarian rule. There was here no provocation by Serbia, no unrest inspired by Serbian intrigue; but rather the inevitable result of a *régime* of misrule, oppression and persecution.

THE BALKAN LEAGUE AND WARS:

The next development of importance was the rapid expansion of the Balkan States. Serbia, as we have seen, had made considerable progress under King Peter, Bulgaria

had been steadily building up her military strength, and Greece, under the able direction of M. Venizelos, had been almost transformed. Simultaneously, the growth of national chauvinism in Turkey and the effort made by the Young Turks to Ottomanise the Christian population of Macedonia was the cause of much misgiving to all three of her neighbours, neither of whom was prepared to welcome any strengthening of the Ottoman hold upon Turkey-in-Europe or to tolerate the annihilation of the non-Mussulman populations in a province to which all three laid claim. The Turco-Italian war and the consequent weakening of Turkish arms created a propitious occasion, and, under the ægis of Russia, an anti-Turkish Treaty between Bulgaria and Serbia was signed on March 19th, 1912. The cause of Balkan union found a powerful advocate in M. Venizelos, who was exercised about the status of Crete as well as concerning the situation in Macedonia, and, on May 29th of the same year, the Greco-Bulgarian Treaty was signed. These two Treaties formed the basis of the Balkan League.

Austria was well aware of the movement which was afoot, for her relations with Bulgaria had been singularly friendly since 1908, and apart from mere conjectures that the Habsburg Government was kept advised of the negotiations, we find proof in the statement of Dr. Daneff to the *Zeit* newspaper to the effect that the last stone of the Balkan Alliance was laid in Vienna at the end of May, 1912 (on the occasion of the visit of King Ferdinand). Bulgaria definitely approved of the conventions in the following September. It may, therefore, well be asked why Austria, seeing that the success of the Balkan States would probably benefit Serbia, and that her own interests could best be served by fostering rivalry in the Peninsula, gave her assent to the scheme. The probable explanation is that she, together with most of the other Great Powers, was confident that Turkey would emerge victorious, when she would have been provided with an excuse to rush in

to the defence of the Christians and occupy Serbia and Macedonia. Once there, she would have remained. In support of this contention, it may be noted that when France subsequently proposed to offer joint mediation, Austria refused.

War between the Balkan States and Turkey was declared on October 18th, 1912. A month later, the Serbs conclusively defeated the Turks at Koumanovo and decided the Macedonian campaign in favour of the Allies. It is instructive to observe that from the morrow of that victory Austria-Hungary adopted an attitude hostile to Serbia. From that moment she regarded each succeeding success for Serbian arms in the light of a new menace against her vital interests. She invented the ludicrous Prohaska incident and demanded reparation for imaginary insult, massed 200,000 men on the Serbian frontier, laid mines in the Save and Danube and patrolled her monitors before Belgrade during the night, proclaimed the inviolability of the Sandjak of Novi Bazaar to prevent contact between Montenegro and Serbia, later on ordered the Serbs to arrest their march to the Adriatic and the Montenegrins to evacuate Scutari, and finally demanded the creation of an independent Albania with frontiers so extensive that it was impossible for Serbia to accept them. The determination to provoke a European war rather than permit Serbia to attain real freedom was manifested again in March and April, 1913, when general hostilities were once more imminent. On this occasion the Monarchy was in a stronger position than in 1908. The Alliance with Germany had been renewed, both countries had completed their armament, and while the Central Powers threatened, Russia was still unready and France and England argued. Austria accordingly gained the day, Serbia being obliged to content herself with a vain promise of a commercial outlet to the Adriatic.

Nevertheless, peace with Turkey (May 20th, 1913) left Serbia considerably aggrandised—a fact obviously dis-

tasteful to Austria-Hungary, for the ink was scarce dry on the treaty before the diplomats of Vienna and Budapest began to intrigue against its execution. In this connection, their close relations with Sofia served them well, and they forthwith set to work to turn the dispute over the division of the spoils to account. An arrangement between Bulgaria and Serbia proved to be difficult. It cannot be alleged that the Bulgars required any great encouragement in the course which they pursued, for they were determined to secure the hegemony of the Balkans, and, controlled by a mentality largely made up of innate arrogance and greedy rapacity, they held an exaggerated idea both of their own prowess and the weakness of their quondam allies. Thus, while Serbia consented to adopt the normal course of settlement and submit the dispute to the arbitration of the Tzar of Russia, as provided for by the Serbo-Bulgar Treaty, Bulgaria made a pretence of agreement and simultaneously treacherously attacked the Serbs and Greeks during the night of June 29th-30th and ushered in the unhappy conflict of 1913.

In this affair the collaboration of Austria-Hungary with Bulgaria was of the utmost importance, and provides conclusive evidence of the manner in which the Monarchy persisted in its determination to ruin Serbia. As early as May, 1913, the Vienna Government had instructed its Minister at Bucharest to inform the Roumanian Government that in the case of a Serbo-Bulgarian conflict Austria-Hungary would defend Bulgarian interests, if necessary by force of arms. This communication was made to M. Take Jonescu. A further development occurred a few weeks later when, upon the very day upon which the Bulgarian Government instructed Dr. Daneff to leave for the proposed arbitration at Petrograd, the Austrian Minister at Sofia visited King Ferdinand. After a conversation which lasted for four hours, King Ferdinand summoned to him General Savoff, the acting Commander-in-Chief, and the following night the orders for the treacherous attack on

Greece and Serbia were telegraphed to the Bulgarian armies.

The writings of the Viennese press clearly pointed to the existence of an Austro-Bulgarian pact, and influential circles were convinced that Serbia would be defeated. The exact nature of the agreement had remained a secret; but we are entitled to assume that it constituted the engagement outlined to M. Take Jonescu, for, following the defeat of Bulgaria, Austria sought the permission of her Allies to attack Serbia. Her principal difficulty lay with Italy, because, according to the terms of the renewed Triple Alliance, any aggrandisement of Austria-Hungary in the Balkan Peninsula was to be accompanied by an analogous extension of Italian influence. For the details of the conspiracy we are indebted to the statement made by Signor Giolitti in the Italian Chamber. According to these disclosures, the Marquis di San Giuliano telegraphed on August 19th to Signor Giolitti, then absent from Rome, informing him that Austria had notified Italy (and Germany) of her intention to attack Serbia and, characterising her proposed action as "defensive," had invoked the *casus fœderis*. San Giuliano gave it as his opinion that the *casus fœderis* did not exist. M. Giolitti shared his colleague's view, and added that the proposed Austrian action could not be considered as "defensive," since nobody thought of attacking her.

It is, therefore, clear that in August, 1913, Austria desired to perpetrate an unwarrantable and unjustifiable attack upon Serbia (in collaboration with Bulgaria) and that she was restrained principally by the opposition of Italy, who, for her own particular reasons, regarded the possibility of any further extension of Austrian influence in the Peninsula with disfavour. Thus did another Germano-Magyar plot against Serbia fail in its purpose.

Simultaneously, however, the Monarchy had been making full use of the commercial weapon. After the settlement of the annexation crisis, the two States, in

order to demonstrate their friendly disposition toward one another, expressed a mutual desire to end the customs war and regularise their economic relations by a new treaty of commerce. Both sides reduced their demands to a minimum, and a new pact entered into vigour at the beginning of 1911. Under this arrangement the Serbian export was restricted to a limited number of slaughtered cattle and the frontier traffic confined to a very narrow zone.

The duration of the treaty was fixed at seven years, but well before the expiration of that term, the territorial extension of Serbia, her reiterated desire for an outlet on the Adriatic, her arrangement with Greece for through transit by Salonika—all proofs that the Kingdom sought escape from dependence upon her great neighbour—alarmed the Austro-Hungarian Government and drove them to a further endeavour to checkmate the ambitious bid for economic freedom. The new treaty would normally have remained operative until 1918, but no sooner had the Serbo-Bulgarian war finished (1913) than Vienna sent in her demand for a revision, invoking as her reason the fact that the alterations in the distribution of Balkan territory had brought in their train a considerable change in the economic situation. At the same time she communicated her suggestions. Faithful, as always, to the policy of securing virtual control of Serbia, she demanded nothing less than a Customs Union. The Serbs, as was their custom in dealing with the Monarchy, made tactful reply. They were prepared to examine the new situation with the object of ascertaining if a revision of the treaty had really become necessary, and, in such case, to enter into new *pourparlers*. But as to the proposed Customs Union, they refused, in principle, to entertain the idea. This, however, was not what Austria wanted. Her object was to attain political ends by economic and commercial methods. She had no use for a revision of the Treaty without the possibility of the wished-for Customs Union. and negotiations therefore ceased.

This was the finalé of the series of attempts to subjugate Serbia by commercial intrigue, and it is instructive to draw certain deductions from this aspect of Habsburg policy. Alone among the States of Europe, the Monarchy would seem to have failed to recognise that, following the attainment of administrative independence by Serbia in 1878, the little Kingdom thereby obtained the right to treat with other nations on a basis of equality. She continued to regard Serbia as a country to be exploited in the interest of her political and commercial ambitions. Her reclamations universally took the form of demands. She recognised neither Serbia's right to accord her commercial policy with her national interests, nor to refuse proposed stipulations if they were considered disadvantageous. Serbia was regarded as a vassal state, and any refusal to accept Austrian propositions was treated as a hostile action. From this failure to recognise actualities sprang many of the frequent and bitter conflicts which perpetually disturbed the relations between the two countries.

AFTER BUCHAREST

As a result of the two Balkan victories, the territory of the Kingdom of Serbia was nearly doubled and her population increased by some 1,300,000 souls. The common struggle had created indissoluble ties of friendship and interest with Montenegro, the understanding with Greece was complete, and the facilities accorded to Serbian commerce at Salonika placed that port at her disposition. True, the Serbs could not console themselves for the loss of the Adriatic, but they had much to do to organise and develop their conquests. So they sought above all for peace, and strove to give no pretext for interference by Austria-Hungary.

But just as it takes two to make a quarrel, so the good intentions of Serbia alone were not sufficient to preserve

harmony. And harmony in the Balkans was very far from being the desire of Austria-Hungary. Faithful to the precedent created by their attitude towards the Treaty of London (1913), no sooner had the peace of Bucharest been concluded than the Central Powers conspired to ruin it. Austria could not bring herself to pardon the check that her ambitions had received. She had no intention of allowing the *status quo* to stand. "In the Balkans," declared Count Khuen Hedervary to the Hungarian Delegations, "the period of formation and reconstitution is not yet at an end; the war has not brought about peace. The frontiers have only been traced on paper, they are merely provisional. They must be rectified in order that security may be established." It was striking to find the Habsburg Monarchy, the alien governor of down-trodden, oppressed and persecuted subject races, suddenly seized with tender sympathies and respect for the principle of nationalities, anxious for the lot of the semi-civilised Albanians and the ambitions of the Bulgarian outlaws of Macedonia. Yet, in order to serve their sordid political aims, Austro-Hungarian statesmen gave themselves up to such blatant hypocrisy.

Their first move was to organise an Albanian rising (September, 1913). The tribes succeeded in crossing the Serbian frontier and occupying Dibra, when they were met and driven back by Serbian troops, who, in order to protect the national territory against further incursion, occupied certain strategic points of vantage. On October 17th Count Berchtold handed King Peter's Government an ultimatum ordering the evacuation of the positions within a delay of eight days, and, failing compliance, the intervention of Austrian troops was threatened. The importance of this development really centred in the fact that now, for the first time, Austria-Hungary ignored the Triple Entente in her negotiations with a Balkan State. She secured the support of Italy and Germany, but contented herself with merely communicating the text of her Note to

London, Paris and Petrograd. The object of this sinister move, by which it was intended to establish a precedent for isolated Austrian action in the Balkans, did not escape M. Pashitch, and though, after Vienna had spurned the idea of arbitration, Serbia was obliged to capitulate, she addressed her reply to all six of the Great Powers, and thus unmasked the Austrian strategy and restored its quondam European character to the question.

Towards the close of 1913, a further effort was made to secure control of Serbia by circuitous methods. The possession of railway communications with Salonika and Constantinople respectively had always been an essential feature of the evolution of Pan-German policy, and just as Austria-Hungary had held on to the Sandjak of Novi Bazaar until she was convinced that the construction of an iron road through that territory to the Ægean was beyond the competence of her engineers, so Germany had sought in vain for a practical route to the Bosphorus other than through Serbia. Prior to the Balkan Wars the Central Powers had accordingly become convinced that the Belgrade-Nish-Salonika and Belgrade-Nish-Sofia-Constantinople railroads were necessary to the furtherance of their respective aspirations.

Now, in the provinces ceded to Serbia at Bucharest, there lay the Zibeftje-Gumendje section of this organisation—then owned by the Oriental Railway Company, of which the majority of the shares had, for obvious reasons, been purchased by the German and Austrian banks at the request of their Governments. And, since this section was but a continuation of the Serbian State Railways, the Serbian Government proposed to buy it together with the Monastir section of the Monastir-Salonika line exploited by the same company. Count Berchtold vigorously opposed this suggestion. Nothing that Serbia could do or suggest served to turn the Imperial Government from its determination to spread a network of Austrian spies over the Serbian system, and, when negotia-

tions reached a deadlock, Herr Tchirsky * bluntly informed the Serbian Minister in Vienna that, since the Central Powers had need of these railways, it would be necessary for Austria to make war on Serbia! This unambiguous statement was uttered by the Kaiser's representative at the Court of Francis Joseph in the spring of 1914; that is to say, months before the Sarajevo murder staggered Europe and provided the excuse for carrying out the threat.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

During the first six months of 1914 a remarkable series of Conferences between various European crowned heads and statesmen—notably those of the Triple Alliance—were the outward sign of a troubled diplomatic situation, and principal among them stood out the meeting between the Kaiser and the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Konopischt, where it is probable that an aggressive programme was arranged between the Central Powers. During the whole of this period the Balkan situation was in a very unsettled state. The Albanian *régime* under Prince William of Wied had proved a conspicuous failure, and Turkey, who was in close collaboration with Germany, evidenced a desire to regain the sovereignty of the *Ægean* Islands, which had been allotted to Greece, and further provoked Athens by atrociously persecuting the Hellenes in Asia Minor.

What was the nature of the programme elaborated at Konopischt we shall probably never learn. That it concerned a deliberate attempt to upset the Bucharest settlement and exploit the recently arranged rapprochement between Bulgaria and Turkey (together with, perhaps, the unsatisfactory situation in Albania) to the profit of Austria as the advance guard of Pan-Germanism in the Balkans, is obvious from the trend of Teuton-Magyar diplomacy and the bleatings of the officially-inspired Press. But into the

* German Ambassador at Vienna.

prevailing unrest was suddenly thrown the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo on June 28th, 1914.

On the morning of that fatal day the Austrian heir-apparent was driving in the town when a Bosniac named Čabrinović threw two bombs, which fell short. A natural indisposition to take further risks appears to have been over-ridden by official determination, and during the afternoon's procession the assassin Princip murdered the Archduke and his consort by means of two well-aimed shots from an automatic pistol. The Administration naturally alleged the existence of a widespread plot, directed, of course, from Belgrade; but the two principals had little in common, and it is more logical to suggest that no understanding existed between them. Čabrinović was a known anarchist and the son of an Austrian spy, while Princip was a student, remarkable for his industry and application, who had been exiled from his home and politically persecuted by the authorities. The one alleged outside instigation; the other proclaimed his individual responsibility. Both were Austrian subjects.

In effect, the Archduke was the victim of a *régime* which had held Bosnia in bondage for more than thirty years, and which all but openly declared that its object was to exterminate the individuality of the Serbian race. Such methods as had been employed invariably breed their own reward. While for lack of definite proof we pass over the possibility that the crime was deliberately planned by the Pan-Germanists, there is surely little occasion for surprise that some spirit more highly strung, more emotional than its fellows, should have provoked outrage in order to call the attention of Europe to conditions of existence that were fast becoming intolerable to an enslaved people.

Disraeli once said that "Assassination never yet changed the history of the world," and in this instance it would have served only for an increase of repression in Bosnia, had not Austria-Hungary, and with her Germany,

been ready to utilise any and every excuse for accomplishing their desire to annihilate Serbia as a step in the direction of world hegemony. Despite the anxiety of the Vienna and Budapest newspapers to fasten the responsibility upon Serbia, there were no immediate developments. As a matter of fact, it would seem that the crime at first upset some deeply-laid German plan, for the Kaiser, on learning the news, is alleged to have remarked significantly: "All my work must be recommenced." But the Austro-Hungarian diplomats were quick to recognise the new and unlooked-for opportunity of carrying through their nefarious schemes.

"We must settle our account with Serbia," wrote Baron von Giesl from Belgrade to his Government. "Both in order that our Monarchy may preserve its position as a Great Power, and even in order that it may continue to exist as a Great Power, a war is inevitable. If we hesitate to place our relations with our neighbour on a clear basis, we must share the responsibility for the difficulties and unfavourable conditions of the conflict which must necessarily be engaged, sooner or later, in the future. If we are resolved to present formidable demands, together with a demand for a real control—for only a control of this kind will succeed in cleaning out the Augean stables of Pan-Slav agitation—we must take into consideration all the possible consequences of our action and possess, from the very commencement, the firm will to obtain our requirements. Half-measures and protracted negotiations, resulting in a mixed compromise, would be the hardest blow that could be dealt at the credit of Austria in Serbia and the situation in Europe."

In short, the Baron saw that the long-awaited occasion to secure that real control of Serbia for which Austria had so persistently striven, had at length arrived. His advice obviously accorded with the opinion prevalent in Vienna and Berlin. Moreover, the situation in Europe seemed favourable. England had her Irish crisis, France her

Caillaux scandal, and Russia her labour troubles. The military position was likewise propitious for the Central Powers. The Vienna *Militaerische Rundschau* declared: "The moment is yet favourable for us. If we do not decide upon war now, we shall have to fight in two or three years at the latest in less favourable circumstances. At present the initiative lies with us; Russia is not ready, the moral factors are with us, as also is the force. As we must fight some day, let us provoke the conflict immediately."

Despite the bellicose attitude of the major part of the Austro-Hungarian press and the general effort to convey to Europe the impression that the assassination was the result of a plot prepared in Serbia, the exchange of views occasioned in diplomatic circles justified a hope that there would be no untoward development. Serbia took early steps to make her position clear. On June 30th, M. Yovanovitch* advised Baron Macchio that "The Serbian Government most energetically disapproves of the Sarajevo murder and on its part will loyally do everything possible to demonstrate that it will not tolerate on its territory any agitation or enterprise calculated to jeopardise our relations with Austria-Hungary, already so delicate." The following day M. Pashitch notified his Ministers accredited to European Courts that the crime had met with the reprobation of all classes in Serbia, where it was recognised that it might have a most unfavourable repercussion upon relations with the Monarchy. He protested, however, against the endeavour of the Austro-Hungarian press to saddle Serbia with the responsibility for an act of madness committed by an Austrian subject which it was in the vital interest of Serbia herself to avert.

This spirit seems at first to have been reflected or assumed by Austro-Hungarian diplomacy. On June 30th the Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople assured the Serbian *chargé d'affaires* that he need have no fear lest the event should endanger the more satisfactory relations

* The Serbian Minister at Vienna.

existing between the two States, and on July 3rd Baron Macchio told M. Yovanovitch at Vienna that Austria-Hungary accused neither the Serbian people nor their Government, but "certain agitators." Finally, the aged Emperor himself, in addressing the Austrian and Hungarian Presidents of Council, declared that he was "convinced that the murder is only the work of a small group of misguided persons."

It was scarcely necessary for M. Pashitch to assure the world through his Ministers that the incident was regarded with unmixed disapproval by King Peter's Cabinet, for, apart from the obvious fact that the State had pressing need of a prolonged peace in which to repair the wastage of the recent campaigns and consolidate her conquests, the Government had striven to guard against any aggravation of their relations with the neighbouring monarchy. Any anarchistic tendency in Belgrade had been carefully watched, and, indeed, the Belgrade police had actually warned their Vienna confrères against Čabrinović—to no purpose—and on June 21st M. Pashitch himself had advised the Ballplatz of his suspicions that a plot was being organised in Bosnia. It is evidences such as these, added to the unpopularity of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand in certain Viennese circles, the Emperor's preference for the Archduke Karl, and the fact that in the alleged presence of a widespread conspiracy (signalled by the Sarajevo police the following day, and of which, if it existed, they must have been well aware previously) the victim was driven into public again after Čabrinović's abortive attempt on his life, which lent weight to the suggestion that the crime was actually abetted by the Austro-Hungarian authorities themselves.

When this has been said, however, it must be admitted that the suspicions that some of the principal actors in the Sarajevo drama were in close relation with persons at Belgrade were too strong to be passed over in silence by the Austro-Hungarian authorities. Under the circumstances, the Monarchy very properly might have acquainted the

Serbian Government with the facts and the names of those compromised by the evidence and called upon them:—

- (1) To hold answerable those judged who were in Serbian territory, and
- (2) To give guarantees for a more effective control of the Pan-Serbian movement.

Had this very logical course been adopted, it is evident from the declaration made by M. Pashitch and the reply subsequently sent by Serbia to the Austrian ultimatum that the matter could have been arranged in a manner apparently satisfactory to all parties. That the possibility of such an equitable arrangement was not overlooked in the early days following the tragedy is obvious from the assurances given to the Entente in Vienna that the conditions imposed upon Serbia would be most acceptable and such as would permit them to count upon a pacific solution of the crisis. Further, on July 8th, the *Pester Lloyd* (Budapest) declared that—"Nothing will be demanded from the Serbian Government that can affect their natural self-consciousness or the national dignity entrusted to their care."

As an alternative, it was open to the Monarchy (as the Agent of the Central Powers) to turn the incident to account and use the assassination to re-open the whole question of her relations with the Serbian State and the Jugo-Slav movement, and make a further bid for a re-settlement of the Balkans in her favour. From the outset this course was strongly supported in certain clerical, militarist and diplomatic circles. The *Reichspost* was early on the scene with a declaration that "We have neglected to smoke out the poisonous den of Belgrade in time," the *Militaerische Rundschau* wrote: "At the slightest attempt of Serbia to deny or laud (the crime) our only reply must be at last, at last, the march on Belgrade," and the already quoted letter of Baron Giesl is sufficient evidence of the Serbophobe diplomatic point of view.

For some days there was a *détente*, due, no doubt, to consideration of the general European situation; but by July 14th, it became evident that the militarist party had triumphed and that Austria had determined upon extreme measures regardless of possible consequences. On that day, the *Neue Freie Presse*, whose intimate relations with the Berlin Foreign Office were well-known, declared:

"We must settle our affair with Serbia by force of arms. It is evident that a settlement is impossible by pacific means, and, since we shall arrive at war later on, it is better to finish at once."

In addition, the entire Government-controlled Austrian and Hungarian press was inflamed by the official *Korrespondenz Bureau*, and it became evident that Sarajevo was to be employed as a lever for the application of the old policy of reducing Serbia to dependence upon the Monarchy. On July 15th, M. Yovanovitch foreshadowed the memoire and the ultimatum which were to follow nearly a fortnight later, and from far off London M. Boshkovitch signalled his conviction that Austria-Hungary was preparing to exert such pressure on Serbia as could be transformed into hostile attack.

Little doubt now existed that the Central Powers were prepared for a general conflagration. On July 21st the Russian Ambassador at Vienna made it known that no *démarche* made with the object of humiliating Serbia could leave Russia indifferent. The next day, when the text of the Austrian Note was already known in Berlin, the German press put forward the theory that war was inevitable and the moment very opportune, and on July 24th M. Sazonoff unveiled the real object of the Central Powers when he informed Sir G. Buchanan that Austria "aimed at overthrowing the present *status quo* in the Balkans and establishing her own supremacy there."

The desire to punish Serbia for the murder of the Archduke had become a mere platitude. The crime of Sara-

jevo, like the annexation of Bosnia-Hertzegovina, the creation of an independent Albania and the encouragement afforded to Bulgaria in 1913, had been made a servant of the Pan-German scheme to establish Austria on the Ægean and Germany on the Bosphorous. Nothing could have been clearer than Count Mensdorff's declaration to Sir Edward Grey on July 27th that:

"So long as Serbia was confronted with Turkey, Austria never took any severe measures because of her adherence to the policy of the free development of the Balkan States. Now that Serbia had doubled her territory and population without any Austrian interference (His Excellency should have said 'in spite of Austrian interference') the suppression of Serbia's subversive aims was a matter of self-defence and self-preservation on Austria's part."

In other words, the Central Powers had determined once again to reduce Serbia to the status of a vassal or annihilate her as a step in the subjugation of the Balkan Peninsula to Pan-German ambition, and to carry through their aims, if necessary, by an appeal to the sword.

Count Mensdorff's illuminating declaration was immediately confirmed by Count Berchtold himself, who informed Sir Maurice de Bunsen that he sought a revision of the Treaty of Bucharest. The Austrian Chancellor averred that he had never really believed in the permanency of that arrangement, which was necessarily most artificial, it being obvious that the interests it had hoped to conciliate were in themselves absolutely opposed the one to the other. This, of course, was only a half-truth, but the underlying idea will be understood when it is remembered that Austria had backed Bulgaria in the Second Balkan War and that the Central Powers were assured of the support of Bulgars and Turks in the coming conflict.

Yet, until the end of July, the Central Powers persisted in a half-hearted attempt to hide their real intentions. Even on July 27th, Count Mensdorff contradicted his

undiplomatic *exposé* of Austria's designs by declaring that the Monarchy had neither any intention of taking Serbian territory nor any aggressive designs against Serbia. But the mask was speedily dropped. On the following day Count Berchtold informed the Italian Ambassador that he would reserve his attitude as to the future, and on July 30th, the Austrian Ambassador at Rome told the Marquis di San Giuliano that Austria-Hungary could not promise to respect the integrity of Serbia, as it was impossible to foresee if, during the war, it would be necessary to conserve Serbian territory. Yet more illuminating light was shed on the position from Constantinople. On July 29th, Mr. H. D. Beaumont reported to the Foreign Office a conversation with the Austrian Ambassador in which the latter had spoken of the deplorable economic situation of Salonika under Greek administration, and of the assistance which the Austrian army could count upon from the Mussulman population discontented with Serbian rule. Mr. Beaumont gathered from this that Austrian aims might extend to a punitive occupation of Serbian territory south of the Sandjak of Novi Bazaar.

The whole manœuvre was thus laid bare. Austria-Hungary had tried many and divers means to unbar the gateway to Salonika. Serbia had resisted political provocation and commercial pressure alike; she had emerged successful from the wars of 1912 and 1913; and so it was decreed in Berlin and Vienna that a chance crime should force her to yield and loose the Teuton-Magyar hordes into the Peninsula. The time had come to strike for a free road from Vienna to Salonika and from Berlin to Baghdad. Well did the Serbian Minister at Petrograd assure the Count Pourtalés on July 24th:—"You will soon be convinced that this is not a dispute between Serbia and Austria, but a European question." The shots fired by Prinčip at Sarajevo had set in motion a deep-laid German scheme to secure the hegemony of the world and strike a mortal blow at Imperial Britain.

Such, then, were the motives which dictated the composition of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia. Its terms provoked in Europe a sense of stupefaction greater than that created by the Sarajevo murder itself. Sir Edward Grey informed Count Mensdorff that he had "never before seen one State address to another independent State a document of so formidable a character," and it became evident to almost every statesman in Europe that the intentions of the Central Powers went much farther than a mere desire to obtain satisfaction for a crime which might or might not have been hatched upon Serbian soil.

At 6 p.m. on July 23rd, 1914, Baron Giesl presented the epoch-making ultimatum from Austria-Hungary to Serbia. It was a document of which the principal authors appear to have been Count Forgatch, the notorious forger of the Friedjung documents, Count Tisza, the Hungarian Premier, and Herr Tschirsky, the German Minister at Vienna. It commenced with the following preamble:—

"On the 31st March, 1909, the Serbian Minister in Vienna, on the instructions of the Serbian Government, made the following declaration to the Imperial and Royal Government:

"Serbia recognises that the *fait accompli* regarding Bosnia has not affected her rights, and consequently she will conform to the decisions that the Powers may take in conformity with article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin. In deference to the advice of the Great Powers Serbia undertakes to renounce from now onwards the attitude of protest and opposition which she has adopted with regard to the annexation since last autumn. She undertakes, moreover, to modify the direction of her policy with regard to Austria-Hungary and to live in future on good neighbourly terms with the latter.'

"The history of recent years, and in particular the painful events of the 28th June last, have shown the existence of a subversive movement with the object of detaching a part of the territories of Austria-Hungary from the Monarchy. The movement, which had its

birth under the eye of the Serbian Government, had gone so far as to make itself manifest on both sides of the Serbian frontier in the shape of acts of terrorism and a series of outrages and murders.

"Far from carrying out the formal undertakings contained in the declaration of 31st March, 1909, the Royal Serbian Government has done nothing to repress these movements. It has permitted the criminal machinations of various societies and associations directed against the Monarchy, and has tolerated unrestrained language on the part of the Press, the glorification of the perpetrators of outrages, and the participation of officers and functionaries in subversive agitation. It has permitted an unwholesome propaganda in public instruction. In short, it has permitted all manifestations of a nature to incite the Serbian population to hatred of the Monarchy and contempt of its institutions.

"This culpable tolerance of the Royal Serbian Government had not ceased at the moment when the events of the 28th June last proved its fatal consequences to the whole world.

"It results from the depositions and confessions of the criminal perpetrators of the outrage of the 28th June that the Sarajevo assassinations were planned in Belgrade, that the arms and explosives with which the murderers were provided had been given to them by Serbian officers and functionaries belonging to the Narodna Odbrana, and finally, that the passage into Bosnia of the criminals and their arms was organised and effected by the chiefs of the Serbian frontier service.

"The above-mentioned results of the magisterial investigation do not permit the Austro-Hungarian Government to pursue any longer the attitude of expectant forbearance which it has maintained for years in face of the machinations hatched in Belgrade, and thence propagated in the territories of the Monarchy. The results, on the contrary, impose on it the duty of putting an end to the intrigues which form a perpetual menace to the tranquility of the Monarchy.

"To achieve this end the Imperial and Royal Government sees itself compelled to demand from the Royal Serbian Government a formal assurance that it condemns this dangerous propaganda against the Monarchy

—in other words, the whole series of tendencies, the ultimate aim of which is to detach from the Monarchy territories belonging to it,—and that it undertakes to suppress by every means this criminal and terrorist propaganda.”

In addition to the above indictment further allegations were embodied in a communication, made to the Great Powers on July 24th :

“On the 31st March, 1909, the Royal Serbian Government addressed to Austria-Hungary the declaration of which the text is reproduced above.

“On the very day after this declaration Serbia embarked on a policy of instilling revolutionary ideas into the Serb subjects of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and so preparing the separation of the Austro-Hungarian territory on the Serbian frontier.

“Serbia became the centre of a criminal agitation.

“No time was lost in the formation of societies and groups whose object, either avowed or secret, was the creation of disorders on Austro-Hungarian territory. These societies and groups count among their members generals and diplomatists, Government officials and judges—in short, men at the top of official and unofficial society in the kingdom.

“Serbian journalism is almost entirely at the service of this propaganda, which is directed against Austria-Hungary, and not a day passes without the organs of the Serbian Press stirring up their readers to hatred or contempt for the neighbouring Monarchy, or to outrages directed more or less openly against its security and integrity.

“A large number of agents are employed in carrying on by every means the agitation against Austria-Hungary and corrupting the youth in the frontier provinces.

“Since the recent Balkan crisis there has been a recrudescence of the spirit of conspiracy inherent in Serbian politicians, which has left such sanguinary imprints on the history of the kingdom. Individuals belonging formerly to bands employed in Macedonia

have come to place themselves at the disposal of the terrorist propaganda against Austria-Hungary.

"In the presence of these doings, to which Austria-Hungary has been exposed for years, the Serbian Government has not thought it incumbent on it to take the slightest step. The Serbian Government has thus failed in the duty imposed on it by the solemn declaration of the 31st March, 1909, and acted in opposition to the will of Europe and the undertaking given to Austria-Hungary.

"The patience of the Imperial and Royal Government in the face of the provocative attitude of Serbia was inspired by the territorial disinterestedness of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the hope that the Serbian Government would end in spite of everything by appreciating Austria-Hungary's friendship at its true value. By observing a benevolent attitude towards the political interests of Serbia, the Imperial and Royal Government hoped that the kingdom would finally decide to follow an analogous line of conduct on its own side. In particular Austria-Hungary expected a development of this kind in the political ideas of Serbia, when, after the events of 1912, the Imperial and Royal Government, by its disinterested and ungrudging attitude, made such a considerable aggrandisement of Serbia possible.

"This benevolence which Austria-Hungary showed towards the neighbouring State had no restraining effect on the proceedings of the kingdom, which continued to tolerate on its territory propaganda of which the fatal consequences were demonstrated to the whole world on the 28th June last, when the Heir Presumptive to the Monarchy and his illustrious consort fell victims to a plot hatched at Belgrade.

"In the presence of this state of things the Imperial and Royal Government has felt compelled to take new and urgent steps at Belgrade with a view to inducing the Serbian Government to stop the incendiary movement that is threatening the security and integrity of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

"The Imperial and Royal Government is convinced that in taking this step it will find itself in full agreement with the sentiments of all civilised nations, who cannot permit regicide to become a weapon that can be employed

with impunity in political strife, and the peace of Europe to be continually disturbed by movements emanating from Belgrade.

"In support of the above the Imperial and Royal Government holds at the disposal of the ——— Government a *dossier* elucidating the Serbian intrigues and the connection between these intrigues and the murder of the 28th June."

These two comprehensive apologia which accompanied the Ultimatum comprise the Austrian case and, as such, are worthy of examination. The principal accusations made against Serbia, were as follows:—

(1) *That she had disregarded her 1909 declaration as laid down in paragraph (1) of the Austrian Note.*

It must be observed that the agreement then entered into was made under duress, and constituted a denial of the actualities of the political development of South-Eastern Europe. Nevertheless, it cannot be disputed that the Serbian Government loyally adhered to its declaration, for neither it nor any of its organs was guilty of participation in any movement calculated to endanger good relations with its neighbour. In support of this contention it may be submitted that only once had the Austrian Government made any representation of a breach of the agreement, and upon that occasion explanations of a satisfactory nature had been received from Belgrade. The allegation of official complicity could not, under any circumstances, have been substantiated.

(2) *That she had tolerated the existence of a subversive movement which instilled revolutionary ideas into Serbian subjects of the Monarchy, which had for its object the separation of the territories of Austria-Hungary from the Monarchy, and which manifested itself on both sides of the frontier in the shape of acts of terrorism.*

Although the internal affairs of Serbia were surely beyond the scope of Austro-Hungarian jurisdiction, it may

well be asked what "acts of terrorism" on the Serbian side of the frontier the Viennese diplomatists had in mind. If the assassination of King Alexander (who was admittedly a tool of the Habsburgs) was referred to, we are at once confronted with the postulatory theory that an interference by Serbia with Austrian propaganda on Serbian soil was an unfriendly act, and supplied with an additional and valuable demonstration of the intentions of the Monarchy towards the Serbian State. As to outrages in Bosnia, we have already noted that they were prevalent long before the Serbian renaissance set in, the tragedy of Sarajevo being merely the culmination of a series of crimes which had illumined the occupation.

It must, however, be admitted that there was present an unofficial subversive movement having for its ultimate object the union of the Jugo-Slav nation. It could hardly have been otherwise. Indeed, all the other border States had embarked on similar campaigns under considerably less provocation. The weakness of Austria-Hungary lay in the fact that it was an artificial Empire, a negation of the principle of nationality made up of a minority of two ruling castes and a majority of subject peoples, who owed allegiance primarily to forces beyond its frontiers. Its ultimate disintegration had been widely accepted as a political dogma, and, in consequence, it was afflicted not only with a Serbian, but with an Italian, a Russian, a Roumanian, and even a German propaganda, the object of all being to detach their co-nationalists.

Moreover, the Serbs would have been blind alike to past and to contemporary history had they not realised that the Monarchy was intent upon their destruction, national and economic, and while officially and as a whole they sought by diplomatic methods to achieve the unification of their race and an outlet to the Adriatic seaboard, some among them, more strongly imbued with the national idea, were undoubtedly carried beyond the extremes of international courtesy. To this extent, Austria-Hungary

had a legitimate grievance; but it was one which could have been satisfied by less humiliating demands than were embodied in the Ultimatum, and which *were* completely satisfied by the terms of the Serbian reply. If, at any time, the Monarchy had called attention to the ramifications of what was essentially a peaceful, and to a great extent an excusable propaganda, she would have caught the ear of Europe entire and doubtless secured such alterations in the Serbian Constitution as would have permitted the Government to check private agitation. No such step was taken.

On the other hand, the Austrian authorities themselves made no effort to remove the causes of discontent provoked by the attempt of the German and Magyar minority to control and exploit the Slav majority—a proceeding which had made the Jugo-Slav provinces such a fruitful field for the spread of sedition. After every available argument has been advanced against the Serbian nationalists, the fact remains that when an Empire breaks its plighted word—as Austria-Hungary did in 1908—and sets out to govern without respect to the rights of the governed, when it submits a subject race to the horrors of an alien, corrupt and tyrannical administration at a time when men of the same race, speaking the same tongue, are living in liberty on the other side of a frontier, the methods employed breed their own reward.

Finally, and apart from all consideration of the evidence provided by the subsequent attitude of all sections of German and Magyar society, it is abundantly clear that a peaceful solution of the crisis was not desired, and that the intention of the Central Powers was to create a motive for militant action against Serbia in pursuance of a grandiose scheme of world-conquest.

(3) *That she had employed Serbian journalism in the interests of the propaganda.*

It was one of the misfortunes of the Serbian Government that the Constitution deprived it of all effective con-

trol of the Press, which was free to express any sentiments provoked in the pursuit of particular political aims. They were in possession of no authority, either constitutional or legal, to influence the language of the journals, which could only be confiscated for the crimes of "lèse-majesté" or incitement to revolution. Yet it is difficult to understand in what manner the admittedly outspoken utterances of the Belgrade newspapers could have materially affected the situation in Bosnia, for since the annexation crisis the entry of one after another of them into the Monarchy had been rigorously prohibited, and if their informations succeeded in reaching any important body of Austrian subjects, they must necessarily have been circulated deliberately by the official *Korrespondenz Bureau*.

It having been admitted that the language of the uncontrolled Serbian publicists was violent, what shall be said of the writings of the officially inspired scribes of the Monarchy? For a whole decade they had unceasingly maligned Serbia, heaped indignities upon the Serbian population and acted as the instruments of an insidious campaign of calumny and invective. Throughout the Balkan wars they had treated King Peter's army with scant respect, and the events of 1914 found them busily engaged in alarming European public opinion and exciting that of their own country into a condition of jingoistic exasperation against their anathema. The Ballplatz may, of course, have considered that journalistic methods accounted highly laudable in Vienna and Budapest could not be tolerated in Belgrade, but unless this one-sided contention be allowed, there would appear to have been little to choose between the two parties to this regrettable press polemic.

(4) *That examination had shown that the Sarajevo outrage had been planned in Belgrade, and that the arms and explosives employed had been provided by Serbian officers and functionaries belonging to the "Narodna Odbrana."*

In support of this contention, no further proof was advanced than the published findings of the Sarajevo courts. In most countries such testimony could have been accepted without hesitation; but the revelations of the Agram and Friedjung trials, to say nothing of sundry less important but equally scandalous affairs, tend to support the view that, on this occasion, the circumstances called for the production of confirmatory evidence of a less impeachable character than that actually presented. Moreover, the condition of Serbia in 1914—her complete unpreparedness for war and her pressing need for peace—was universally recognised in the Kingdom, and Europe would have been justified in demanding very definite corroboration before admitting that "Serbian officers and functionaries" were so ignorant of the state of their country as to deliberately aid and abet a crime so calculated to endanger satisfactory diplomatic relations with the Monarchy.

Similar comment may with reason be apportioned to the unsubstantiated claims of Serbian complicity laid out in the annex which accompanied the Austrian note, and also to the celebrated *dossier* "elucidating the Serbian intrigues and the connection between these intrigues and the murder of the 28th June" which was held at the disposal of the European governments. Even for what they were, Entente statesmen were afforded no opportunity to proceed to an investigation.

"What is the good of troubling yourselves to send in a '*dossier*' if you do not give us time to examine it?" asked M. Sazonoff of the Austrian Ambassador.

"The results of our own inquiry are sufficient for us," replied Count Scapary.

(5) *That the Monarchy, by its disinterested and ungrudging attitude had made possible a considerable aggrandisement of Serbia after the events of 1912.*

The Ballplatz had previously demonstrated no apparent gift of humour, and, if this suggestion was

seriously meant, it confronts us with a further instance of that hypocrisy which so consistently marked Austria-Hungary's diplomatic treatment of King Peter's Kingdom. It suffices to recall the Empire's anti-Serbian military preparations of 1912, its demands for the evacuation of Durazzo and Scutari, its creation of an independent Albania, its pact with Bulgaria and its desire to join in the Balkan conflict in 1913, to prove conclusively that Serbia's territorial aggrandisement was carried through in spite of Austria-Hungary rather than with her toleration. The claim was entirely inconsistent with the evolution of Austrian diplomacy during the previous century, and denoted the existence of a warped political vision which had much to do with the perpetration of discord between the two States.

Stripped of the determination of the Central Powers to exploit the tragedy of Sarajevo in furtherance of Pan-German ambition, the questions at issue were reduced to a simple proposition, which was summed up with considerable clarity by the *Zeit*, one of the few Viennese journals which kept its head during the crisis:—

“There are only two complaints against Serbia: the importation of bombs and enthusiasm for the Pan-Serbian idea. So far as concerns the bomb, which, in effect, came from Belgrade, it was not that engine which killed the Archduke, but the ball of a Browning, an Austrian arm imported from Belgium. As to the Pan-Serbian idea, it cannot be suppressed by suppressing all the associations which propagate it. A diplomatic *démarche* cannot put down Pan-Serbism any more than Pan-Germanism or Pan-Slavism. Furthermore, the Pan-Serbian idea is only a crime in Austria, where it seeks a diminution of the State. It is not a crime in Serbia, where it seeks her aggrandisement. The only crime is propaganda by act or by anarchy, whether its object is national or social, and the duty of Serbia is to combat it with all her force. But the example of Italy demonstrates the uncertain success of the policy of

repression. Let us then protect ourselves, not with a useless diplomatic note, but with a sound policy of nationalities and with an active and vigilant police."

The demands which formed the second part of the Austrian Note (each line of which, as Sir Maurice de Bunsen advised the British Foreign Office, had been approved by the German Ambassador in Vienna) clearly demonstrated that Austro-German diplomacy had much more extensive objects in view than the mere "putting an end to the intrigues which form a perpetual menace to the tranquility of the Monarchy." There can be no doubt that the formulation of unacceptable conditions had been intentional and deliberate. Sir Maurice telegraphed from Vienna on July 25th that "the language of the Press this morning leaves the impression that the surrender of Serbia is neither expected nor really desired," and the inspired newspapers of the two Central Empires simultaneously urged the new theory that the Austro-Serbian conflict—which they now declared to be inevitable—was a purely local affair, in which no other nation had the right to interfere. Sufficient proof that this view emanated from the Foreign Offices of Berlin and Vienna was supplied by the statement of the German Ambassador in Petrograd to Dr. Spalaikovitch, the Serbian Minister, on July 24th, to the effect that it (the situation created by the Ultimatum) was a "question which must be settled by Austria and Serbia only, and in which nobody else should meddle."

In the concluding paragraph of the preamble the Austro-Hungarian Government had considered itself obliged to demand of the Serbian Government "a formal assurance that it condemns this dangerous propaganda against the Monarchy." It then proceeded to indicate the nature of assurances required:—

In order to give a formal character to this undertaking the Royal Serbian Government shall publish on

the front page of its *Official Journal* of the 13th/26th July the following declaration :

"The Royal Government of Serbia condemns the propaganda directed against Austria-Hungary, *i.e.*, the general tendency of which the final aim is to detach from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy territories belonging to it, and it sincerely deplores the fatal consequences of these criminal proceedings.

"The Royal Government regrets that Serbian officers and functionaries participated in the above-mentioned propaganda and thus compromised the good neighbourly relations to which the Royal Government was solemnly pledged by its declaration of the 31st March, 1909.

"The Royal Government, which disapproves and repudiates all idea of interfering or attempting to interfere with the destinies of the inhabitants of any part whatsoever of Austria-Hungary, considers it its duty formally to warn officers and functionaries and the whole population of the kingdom, that henceforward it will proceed with the utmost rigour against persons who may be guilty of such machinations, which it will use all its efforts to anticipate and suppress."

This declaration shall simultaneously be communicated to the Royal Army as an order of the day by His Majesty the King and shall be published in the *Official Bulletin* of the Army.

The Royal Serbian Government further undertakes :

1. To suppress any publication which incites to hatred and contempt of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the general tendency of which is directed against its territorial integrity ;

2. To dissolve immediately the society styled "Narodna Odbrana," to confiscate all its means of propaganda, and to proceed in the same manner against other societies and their branches in Serbia which engage in propaganda against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The Royal Government shall take the necessary measures to prevent the societies dissolved from continuing their activity under another name and form ;

3. To eliminate without delay from public instruction in Serbia, both as regards the teaching body and also as regards the methods of instruction, everything

that serves, or might serve, to foment the propaganda against Austria-Hungary;

4. To remove from the military service, and from the administration in general, all officers and functionaries guilty of propaganda against the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy whose names and deeds the Austro-Hungarian Government reserves to itself the right of communicating to the Royal Government;

5. To accept the collaboration in Serbia of representatives of the Austro-Hungarian Government in the suppression of the subversive movement directed against the territorial integrity of the Monarchy;

6. To take judicial proceedings against accessories to the plot of the 28th June who are on Serbian territory. Delegates of the Austro-Hungarian Government will take part in the investigation relating thereto;

7. To proceed without delay to the arrest of Major Voiya Tankositch and of the individual named Milan Tsiganovitch, a Serbian State employé, who have been compromised by the results of the magisterial enquiry at Sarajevo;

8. To prevent by effective measures the co-operation of the Serbian authorities in the illicit traffic in arms and explosives across the frontier, to dismiss and punish severely the officials of the frontier service at Shabatz and Loznitza guilty of having assisted the perpetrators of the Sarajevo crime by facilitating their passage across the frontier.

9. To furnish the Imperial and Royal Government with explanations regarding the unjustifiable utterances of high Serbian officials, both in Serbia and abroad, who, notwithstanding their official position, did not hesitate after the crime of the 28th June to express themselves in interviews in terms of hostility to the Austro-Hungarian Government; and, finally,

10. To notify the Imperial and Royal Government without delay of the execution of the measures comprised under the preceding heads.

The Austro-Hungarian Government expects the reply of the Royal Government at the latest by six o'clock on Saturday evening, the 25th July.

It is not too much to say that whatever sympathy for

Austria-Hungary might have been aroused in Entente diplomatic circles by the murder of the Archduke was effectively destroyed by the outrageous nature of these demands. Viscount Grey, who had never interested himself in Serbia and who maintained that "The merits of the dispute between Austria and Serbia were not the concern of His Majesty's Government," could not refrain from pointing out to Count Mensdorff that "Demand No. 5 would be hardly consistent with the maintenance of Serbia's independent sovereignty," and considering it a matter for "Great regret that a time limit, and such a short one at that, had been insisted upon at this stage of the proceedings."

As a matter of fact, both Demand No. 5 and the time limit were essential features of the deliberately planned scheme of which the Ultimatum was the outward and visible sign. The intention of the former was to invest Austria-Hungary with the right to appoint officials possessed of authority within the frontiers of Serbia, and history offered ample evidence of the uses to which the facility would have been put. The latter was cunningly elaborated to take Entente diplomacy at a disadvantage, and, if possible, secure the first object of Pan-German ambition by consent. The Central Powers did not desire war for war's sake; they regarded it, and were prepared for it, as a possibly necessary accessory to the fulfilment of their plans. They would have been admirably suited had they been permitted to secure control of the Balkans and connection with Bulgaria and Turkey by trickery and menace, for they would then have been able to husband their resources and prepare for the final blow under conditions most favourable to success. Hence the attempt to depict the Austro-Serbian dispute as a purely local affair, and the issue of an Ultimatum which demanded almost immediate reply at a time when Serbia was at her weakest and Entente diplomacy was considerably disorganised. In Serbia, M. Pashitch was in the provinces (the country was

in the throes of a Parliamentary election), Marshal Putnik, the Chief-of-Staff, was in Hungary, and three other Serbian generals were on hostile soil. MM. Isvolsky and Schebeko, the Tzar's Ambassadors at Paris and Vienna respectively, were in Russia; the Russian and Italian Ambassadors at Berlin were absent on leave; both Britain and Russia were represented by a *chargé d'affaires* at Belgrade, and, most important of all, MM. Poincaré and Viviani, the President and Foreign Minister of the French Republic, had left Petrograd on their return to France, and were actually on the high seas.

There can be no doubt that Austria-Hungary sought to profit by these circumstances. M. Sazonoff's request (to which London and Paris subscribed) for a short extension of the forty-eight hours' delay was flatly refused, and it became obvious not only that Count Berchtold was opposed to discussion, but that even if Serbia accepted the Note *in toto* he would seek other motives for the prosecution of his object and reclaim the military expenses which had been incurred by the Monarchy on its own responsibility and in support of its own Ultimatum. It is not difficult to pierce the cant of Pan-German diplomacy and lay bare the nefarious schemes of Berchtold, Tisza, Tschirsky and their German and Magyar confederates. A kindly fate had at last placed Serbia in their hands, and they were determined either to recall the happy days of Milan, when Belgrade faithfully executed the orders of the Ballplatz, or wipe the Kingdom out of existence.

"After two or three conversations which I had on that day (July 24th)," reported M. Yovanovitch to his Government, "it became clear to me that an armed conflict between Serbia and the Monarchy was inevitable, even in the case of Serbia accepting all the Austro-Hungarian conditions."

M. Pashitch returned to Belgrade on July 24th and the Serbian Cabinet then deliberated on the Austrian Note, after which the Crown Prince Alexander telegraphed to

the Tzar, advising him that Serbia was willing to agree to all demands which were compatible with her situation as an independent State, together with any other conditions the acceptance of which might be advised by His Imperial Majesty.

"We may be attacked after the expiration of the time limit by the Austro-Hungarian army which is concentrating on our frontiers," proceeded His Royal Highness. "It is impossible for us to defend ourselves, and we beseech Your Majesty to lend us your aid as soon as possible."

It is significant that the Tzar's reply was not despatched from Petrograd until July 27th, *i.e.*, two days after the rupture of diplomatic relations with Austria.

"In addressing yourself to me at a particularly difficult moment," telegraphed the Russian ruler, "Your Royal Highness is not mistaken as to my sentiments towards him and my cordial sympathy for the Serbian people.

"My most serious attention is concentrated on the actual situation, and my Government is deploying every effort to smooth down the present difficulties. I have no doubt whatever that Your Royal Highness and the Royal Government, while safeguarding the dignity of Serbia, will facilitate this task by neglecting nothing in order to reach a solution which will void the horrors of a new war.

"As long as there is the slightest hope of avoiding bloodshed all my efforts must be directed to that end. If, despite our sincere desire, We do not succeed, Your Highness may rest assured that in no case will Russia disinterest herself from the fate of Serbia."

This communication contained nothing to suggest that it had been held back deliberately in the Russian capital, and the only alternative assumption is that Prince Alexander's message was maliciously detained on its journey across the Monarchy.

Whatever may have been the real cause of the delay, it remains that, although M. Pashitch was doubtless aware

that negotiations of an epoch-making character were being conducted by the various European Chancelleries, he held no promises of support when drawing up his reply to the Ultimatum, and the advice received was limited to recommendations from Petrograd, Paris and London, all urging him to go to the last limit of concession. In no capital—least of all in Vienna—was it imagined that Serbia was prepared to humble herself to the extent indicated by the reply which the Serbian Premier handed to Baron Giesl at 5.45 on the evening of July 25th.

Belgrade,

July 25th, 1914.

The Royal Serbian Government have received the communication of the Imperial and Royal Government of the 10th inst., and are convinced that their reply will remove any misunderstanding which may threaten to impair the good neighbourly relations between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Kingdom of Serbia.

Conscious of the fact that the protests which were made both from the tribune of the national Skupshtina and in the declarations and actions of the responsible representatives of the State—protests which were cut short by the declarations made by the Serbian Government on the 18th March, 1909—have not been renewed on any occasion as regards the great neighbouring Monarchy and that no attempt has been made since that time, either by the successive Royal Governments or by their organs, to change the political and legal state of affairs created in Bosnia and Hertzegovina, the Royal Government draw attention to the fact that in this connection the Imperial and Royal Government have made no representation except one concerning a school book, and that on that occasion the Imperial and Royal Government received an entirely satisfactory explanation. Serbia has several times given proofs of her pacific and moderate policy during the Balkan crisis, and it is thanks to Serbia and to the sacrifice that she has made in the exclusive interest of European peace that that peace has been preserved. The Royal Government cannot be held

responsible for manifestations of a private character, such as articles in the press and the peaceable work of societies—manifestations which take place in nearly all countries in the ordinary course of events, and which, as a general rule, escape official control. The Royal Government are all the less responsible in view of the fact that at the time of the solution of a series of questions which arose between Serbia and Austria-Hungary, they gave proof of a great readiness to oblige, and thus succeeded in settling the majority of these questions to the advantage of the two neighbouring countries.

For these reasons, the Royal Government have been pained and surprised at the statements according to which members of the Kingdom of Serbia are supposed to have participated in the preparations for the crime committed at Sarajevo; the Royal Government expected to be invited to collaborate in an investigation of all that concerns this crime, and they were ready, in order to prove the entire correctness of their attitude, to take measures against any persons concerning whom representations were made to them. Falling in, therefore, with the desire of the Imperial and Royal Government, they are prepared to hand over for trial any Serbian subject, without regard to his situation or rank, of whose complicity in the crime of Sarajevo proofs are forthcoming, and, more especially, they undertake to cause to be published on the first page of the *Journal Officiel*, on the date of the 13th (26th) July, the following declaration:

“The Royal Government of Serbia condemn all propaganda which may be directed against Austria-Hungary, that is to say, all such tendencies as aim at ultimately detaching from the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy territories which form part thereof, and they sincerely deplore the baneful consequences of these criminal movements. The Royal Government regret that, according to the communication from the Imperial and Royal Government, certain Serbian officers and officials should have taken part in the above-mentioned propaganda, and thus compromised the good neighbourly relations to which the Royal Serbian Government was solemnly engaged by the declaration of March 31st, 1909, which declaration disapproves and repudiates all

idea or attempt at interference with the destiny of the inhabitants of any part whatsoever of Austria-Hungary, and they consider it their duty formally to warn the officers, officials, and entire population of the kingdom that henceforth they will take the most rigorous steps against all such persons as are guilty of such acts, to prevent and to repress which they will use their utmost endeavour."

This declaration will be brought to the knowledge of the Royal Army in an order of the day, in the name of His Majesty the King, by His Royal Highness the Crown Prince Alexander, and will be published in the next official army bulletin.

The Royal Government further undertake:

(1) To introduce at the first regular convocation of the Skupshtina a provision in the Press law providing for the most severe punishment of incitement to hatred or contempt of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and for taking action against any publication the general tendency of which is directed against the territorial integrity of Austria-Hungary. The Government engage at the approaching revision of the Constitution to cause an amendment to be introduced into article (22) of the Constitution of such a nature that such publication may be confiscated, a proceeding at present impossible under the categorical terms of article 22 of the Constitution.

(2) The Government possess no proof, nor does the Note of the Imperial and Royal Government furnish them with any, that the "Narodna Odbrana" and other similar societies have committed up to the present any criminal act of this nature through the proceedings of any of their members. Nevertheless, the Royal Government will accept the demand of the Imperial and Royal Government, and will dissolve the "Narodna Odbrana" Society and every other society which may be directing its efforts against Austria-Hungary.

(3) The Royal Serbian Government undertake to remove without delay from their public educational establishments in Serbia all that serves or could serve to foment propaganda against Austria-Hungary, whenever the Imperial and Royal Government furnish them with facts and proofs of these propaganda.

(4) The Royal Government also agree to remove from military service all such persons as the judicial enquiry may have proved to be guilty of acts directed against the integrity of the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and they expect the Imperial and Royal Government to communicate to them at a later date the names and the acts of these officers and officials for the purposes of the proceedings which are to be taken against them.

(5) The Royal Government must confess that they do not clearly grasp the meaning or the scope of the demand made by the Imperial and Royal Government that Serbia shall undertake to accept the collaboration of the organs of the Imperial and Royal Government upon their territory, but they declare that they will admit such collaboration as agrees with the principle of international law, with criminal procedure, and with good neighbourly relations.

(6) It goes without saying that the Royal Government consider it their duty to open an inquiry against all such persons as are, or eventually may be, implicated in the plot of the 25th June, and who happen to be within the territory of the Kingdom. As regards the participation in this inquiry of Austro-Hungarian agents or authorities appointed for this purpose by the Imperial and Royal Government, the Royal Government cannot accept such an arrangement, as it would be a violation of the Constitution and of the law of criminal procedure; nevertheless, in concrete cases communications as to the results of the investigation in question might be given to the Austro-Hungarian agents.

(7) The Royal Government proceeded, on the very evening of the delivery of the Note, to arrest Commandant Voiya Tankositch. As regards Milan Tsiganovitch, who is a subject of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and who up to 28th June was employed (on probation) by the directorate of railways, it has not yet been possible to arrest him.

The Austro-Hungarian Government are requested to be so good as to supply as soon as possible, in the customary form, the presumptive evidence of guilt, as well as the eventual proofs of guilt which have been collected

up to the present, at the inquiry at Sarajevo for the purpose of the latter inquiry.

(8) The Serbian Government will reinforce and extend the measures which have been taken for preventing the illicit traffic of arms and explosives across the frontier. It goes without saying that they will immediately order an inquiry and will severely punish the frontier officials on the Shabatz-Loznitza line who have failed in their duty and allowed the authors of the crime of Sarajevo to pass.

(9) The Royal Government will gladly give explanations of the remarks made by their officials, whether in Serbia or abroad, in interviews after the crime, and which, according to the statement of the Imperial and Royal Government, were hostile towards the Monarchy, as soon as the Imperial and Royal Government have communicated to them the passages in question in these remarks, and as soon as they have shown that the remarks were actually made by the said officials, although the Royal Government will itself take steps to collect evidence and proofs.

(10) The Royal Government will inform the Imperial and Royal Government of the execution of the measures comprised under the above heads, in so far as this has not already been done by the present Note, as soon as each measure has been ordered and carried out.

If the Imperial and Royal Government are not satisfied with this reply, the Serbian Government, considering that it is not to the common interest to precipitate the solution of this question, are ready, as always, to accept a pacific understanding, either by referring this question to the decision of the International Tribunal of The Hague, or to the Great Powers which took part in the drawing up of the declaration made by the Serbian Government on 31st March, 1909.

It is sufficient comment on the conciliatory nature of this reply to remark that in all diplomatic circles which were working for the preservation of the peace of Europe it created a very favourable impression. Serbia had humbled her national pride to an unexpected extent and

conceded practically everything that the Monarchy had required, the only reservations being in respect to the two clauses which insisted that representatives of Austria-Hungary should participate in the repression of the "subversive movement directed against the territorial integrity of the Monarchy" and take part in judicial investigations on Serbian soil. There was, of course, a great deal more behind this demand than appeared on the surface. If Serbia had once admitted Austro-Hungarian officials, it is questionable whether she would ever have been able to rid herself of them. They would have become inevitably the hub of a vast organisation of espionage and corruption, eating like a canker at the heart of the nation, sapping its vitality, ever weakening it until it became once more the poor, hapless tool of its mighty neighbour. Had Austria's intentions in this respect been straightforward she could with confidence have accepted the Serbian offer to submit the clauses to International Arbitration; but she well knew that the measure of unrestricted interference which she coveted would not be granted by any impartial tribunal.

Confirmation of the bellicose intentions of the Monarchy was provided by the undue haste which marked the final stage of the negotiations. M. Pashitch presented his reply to the Austro-Hungarian Minister at 5.45 p.m. on July 25th, and within fifteen minutes Baron Giesl had digested that somewhat lengthy and complicated document, despatched a notification of its unsatisfactory character and announced his impending departure. Half an hour later he left Belgrade with the personnel of the Legation.

Despite this sudden rupture of Austro-Serbian diplomatic relations, it was still hoped that the firm attitude adopted by the Triple Entente, and the British proposals for a Conference, to which further reference will be made, would prevent a European outbreak; but all negotiations were suspended on July 28th, when Austria declared war on Serbia in the following terms:—

"The Royal Government of Serbia not having given a satisfactory reply to the Note presented to it by the Austro-Hungarian Ministry on July 23rd, 1914, the Imperial and Royal Government finds it necessary itself to safeguard its rights and interests and to have recourse for this purpose to force of arms. Austria-Hungary, therefore, considers itself from this moment in a state of war with Serbia."

With this momentous declaration, the *pourparlers* between Vienna and Belgrade were brought to a close. Both the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente were quick to recognise that not merely the Austro-Serbian, but the general European question was involved, and, while as early as July 23rd, Germany had indicated to France that if the struggle was not localised she feared that dangerous friction might arise between the two groups, Viscount Grey inaugurated his proposals for mediation by Britain, France, Italy and Germany on July 24th. The following day Viscount Grey renewed his suggestion, again insisting upon the necessity for German co-operation, and Germany, on her part, made a last attempt to localise the struggle by the extraordinary procedure of threatening that "any intervention by a third Power would have incalculable consequences." Apparently the Central Powers were satisfied that they could again attain their object by a combination of bluff and sabre-rattling, and, according to Sir Maurice de Bunsen, the German Ambassador in Vienna had expressed his conviction that Russia would keep quiet during the chastisement of Serbia. "As to Germany," Herr Tschirsky had added, "she knows very well what she is about in backing up Austria-Hungary in this matter." But any misunderstanding was speedily removed by Russia, who announced officially that "an Austro-Serbian conflict could not leave Russia indifferent," and, in addition, the Tzar's Ambassador personally informed Baron Macchio that if actual war broke out with Serbia it would be impossible to localise it, as Russia was not prepared to give

way again, as she had done on previous occasions, and especially during the Bosnian annexation crisis. It is obvious, therefore, that Count Berchtold was fully cognisant of the grave issues involved when (doubtless with the consent of Germany) he telegraphed his declaration of war to Serbia.

On July 26th, after the return of the Emperor to Berlin, Germany shifted her ground so far as the proposed Conference of the Powers was concerned. Whereas hitherto she had made a pretence of willingness to take part in this proceeding, she now confined her activities to passing on to Vienna Viscount Grey's hope that Austria-Hungary would take a favourable view of the Serbian reply, and declined to go beyond that. The next day an important conversation took place in London between the British Foreign Secretary and the German Ambassador. Viscount Grey then observed that the Serbian reply went farther than could have been expected to meet the Austrian demands and pointed out that the German Secretary of State had himself declared that there were some things in the Austrian Note that Serbia could hardly have been expected to accept. He assumed that the Serbian reply could not have gone as far as it did unless Russia had exercised conciliatory influence at Belgrade, and therefore suggested that it was really at Vienna that counsels of moderation were required. If Austria put the Serbian reply aside as being worth nothing and marched into Serbia, it meant that she was determined to crush Serbia at all costs, being reckless of the consequences that might be involved. He accordingly suggested that the Serbian reply should be at least treated as a basis for discussion and pause, and recommended that that course be urged at Vienna.

These views were communicated by the German Chancellor to the Austro-Hungarian Government, who had before them at the same time a Russian proposal to the effect that the means of settling the Austro-Serbian conflict

should be discussed directly between the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Austrian Ambassador at Petrograd. We are thus provided with an illuminating insight into the methods of the Austro-Hungarian statesmen, for we observe that on July 28th they simultaneously declined the Russian suggestion, declared war on Serbia, and forthwith replied that it was too late to act upon Viscount Grey's proposal, because the events (which they alone had precipitated) had marched too rapidly.

With one notable exception, Serbia had no concern with the further development of the European crisis. Count Mensdorff called upon Viscount Grey on July 29th. He protested that Austria had no idea of territorial aggrandisement (incidentally, it will be remembered that only twenty-four hours later the Austrian Ambassador at Rome informed the Marquis di San Giuliano that Austria could not promise to respect the integrity of Serbia), and the British Minister replied, with manifest logic, that it would be quite possible, without nominally interfering with the independence of Serbia or taking away any of her territory, to turn her into a sort of vassal State. Count Mensdorff deprecated this remark; but he subsequently put forward the extraordinary theorem that, before the Balkan war, Serbia had always been regarded as being in the Austrian sphere of influence!

If, as this short, unsubstantiated assertion implied, Habsburg diplomacy visualised Serbia as a dependency and was incapable of appreciating the fact that she had emerged gradually out of Ottoman tutelage into national freedom, many of its otherwise incomprehensible activities are explained. Viewed from this angle, the refusal of a Customs Union, the desire to prosper and expand, the sympathy for the Austrian Serbs, the removal of the Austrophile King Alexander, and the outbursts of the Belgrade press, were indeed acts of unpardonable insubordination. But, if Count Mensdorff's declaration thus served to explain the demands made upon Serbia in the Ultimatum,

it effectually exposed the hollowness of the dishonest indictment by which they were prefaced.

As a matter of fact, examined from the viewpoint either of the individual ambition of the Monarchy or the carefully elaborated programme of the Central Powers, Serbia (and with her the defined sense of nationality inborn in the Southern Slavs) was an obstacle to progress. Her removal, or her relegation to a position of absolute dependence upon Austria-Hungary was a first essential to the substitution of German land domination for British naval supremacy and the evolution of Pan-German world-hegemony. The real "Provocation by Serbia" was a praiseworthy yearning after the blessings of a free and independent existence. It had no relation to the actual crime of Sarajevo, which, in effect, merely provided the Central Powers with an opportunity to draw the Serbs once more within the sphere of Austrian influence, or plunge Europe into bloodshed at a moment when the omens seemed most favourable to the realisation of their aspirations by armed force.

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